

2004 AMERICORPS GUIDELINE CHANGES

In 2003:

Overview – page 6

“In his state of the union address **this** year . . . “

Page 8 -- “This year more than **60,000** AmeriCorps members will serve communities throughout the country.

Page 9 – “In 2003 the Corporation **is announcing an initiative** to help strengthen the accountability and performance of programs . . . “

Page 10 – Audit and Financial Information. “In 2003, we plan to review [financial information] in conjunction with the application in order to assess your organization’s potential for sustainability and overall financial capacity. . . See the application instructions for additional details”

In 2004:

“In his state of the union address **last** year . . . “

Because of the cap imposed in 2003, we changed the number to **50,000** AmeriCorps members.

“In 2004 the Corporation **will continue** to help strengthen the accountability and performance of programs . . . “

Last year, for the first time we collected recent audits/financial statements from applicants. We will not require this of applicants in 2004. The new OMB approved questions provided by the White House faith and community-based task force that we have added to our application will answer the questions we gleaned in 2003 from the audits but for a more recent year.

Dropping this requirement of applicants does not change the requirement for approved applicants to provide a financial survey and other information prior to grant award.

In 2003:

Page 15 – “We define homeland security as appropriately engaging citizens and communities in preparedness and response to acts of terrorism and other disasters. Homeland security includes program that support public safety, public health, or disaster preparedness and relief.

Page 14 – “The Corporation has recently developed new plans for expanding training resources available to programs . . . “

Page 17 – Citizenship – This section states that in the coming year the Corporation will modify the two curricula, *By the People* and *A Guide to Effective Citizenship Through National Service*. Also, we said we would distribute documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

In 2004:

Over this past year, the Corporation has adopted the OMB definition of homeland security – “The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Corporation define homeland security as appropriately engaging citizens and communities in preparedness and response to acts of terrorism and other disasters. Homeland security includes programs that prepare to minimize the damage and recovery from any emergency, natural or man-made. ‘ While the change may not appear to be significant, we want to make sure that all programs applying under the homeland security issue area meet our new OMB approved definition.

Given the expected drastic reduction in training and technical assistance funds, this sentence no longer seems appropriate and could be misleading. We replaced it with the following: “The Corporation has expanded training resources available to programs develop members.”

This has been done. We updated this section to say that the Corporation has modified the curricula and combined them and staff will work with a small number of programs in 2004 to pilot the combined curriculum.

The Corporation does not have the funds to distribute these documents to every member. However, the Citizenship toolkit on our website provides a link to these documents. We added this to the guidelines to make new applicants aware of this.

In 2003:

Page 20 – Recruitment and Management of Volunteers. “The Corporation will develop training and technical assistance resources . . .”

Page 27 – Performance Measurement. The 2003 guidelines state, “. . . you should specify no more than five and no less than three objectives as performance measures in the objectives worksheet.”

Page 34 – Cost per member. “The average cost per member, across all programs within a state, is \$12,800. The maximum cost for any individual program is \$16,000.” For programs applying directly to the Corporation the maximum cost per member was \$12,800.

Page 35 – Member Living Allowance. The minimum living allowance for full-time AmeriCorps members was \$9,900.

Page 47 – Promise Fellows.

In 2004:

The Corporation has developed a Volunteer Management and Recruitment Toolkit which is available on our website. Given the importance of this issue, it made sense to update this and reference it.

On January 23, 2003 we placed an amendment to the 2003 guidelines on the website. This changed the requirement. The amended language reads, “Applicants are required to include at least three performance measures. We will consider any additional performance measures you submit and will negotiate them with the required measure.” We folded this amended language into the 2004 guidelines.

The cost per member is to be determined. Congressional directives and funding constraints are likely to result in the average Corporation cost per member being reduced from the 2003 amount of \$12,800.

The living allowance has been increased to 10,197, to reflect corresponding increase in VISTA living allowance, which is tied to cost of living.

Since the Promise Fellows program is in its final year, we added language telling applicants how they can pick promise fellows up within their regular program, if they chose to do so.

In 2003:

Children and youth was listed as a priority. Other major areas were listed as key elements. Additionally, the guidelines did not clearly include statutory considerations

In 2004:

This section has been added to the Selection Criteria on page 39.

1. The following is a set of priorities that the Corporation will consider in making final selections.
 - (A) national service programs that serve or involve children and youth;
 - (B) national service programs that support the efforts of civic, community, education, and faith-based organizations to solve local programs;
 - (C) national service programs that promote the effective involvement of volunteers;
 - (D) national service programs that build the capacity of community organizations;
 - (E) national service programs that carry out literacy and tutoring programs;
 - (F) innovative national service programs;
 - (G) national service programs that are well established in one or more States at the time of the application and are proposed to be expanded to additional States;
 - (H) grant programs in support of other national service programs if the grant programs are to be conducted by nonprofit organizations with a demonstrated and extensive expertise in the provision of services to meet human, educational, environmental, or public safety needs;
 - (I) professional corps programs; and
 - (J) programs that--
 - (i) received funding from the Commission on National and Community Service (the predecessor agency to the Corporation);
 - (ii) the Corporation determines to meet the requirements of sections 142, 143, and 148-150 of the original National and Community Service Act of 1990, in addition to the current requirements of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended; and
 - (iii) include an evaluation component.
2. In making a competitive distribution of funds to State Commissions, the Corporation may give priority consideration to a national service program that is--
 - (A) proposed in an application submitted by a State Commission; and
 - (B) not one of the types of programs listed above,
if the State Commission provides an adequate explanation of the reasons why it should not be a priority of such State to carry out any of such types of programs in the State.